

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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DRAFTED BY:S/S:RPERITO:WES

APPROVED BY:S/S:RPERITO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 259824

NODIS

WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZINSKI

FOLLOWING REPEAT AMMAN 7973 ACTION SECSTATE DATED OCT 30:

QTE: S E C R E T AMMAN 7973

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

PLEASE PASS WHITE HOUSE FOR DR. BRZEZINSKI

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PORG, PGOV, JO, US, XF

SUBJECT: MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER FOR KING HUSSEIN

REF: STATE 259811

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 259824

SUMMARY: SAW KING, CARRIED OUT INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL AND
PASSED ON PRESIDENT'S LETTER. KING'S REPLY WAS POSITIVE.
HE SAID "IF IT WERE ONLY UP TO US THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM."
HOWEVER, HE ASKED IF OTHERS (EGYPT AND SYRIA) WERE SENT
SIMILAR LETTERS, WISHES TO CONSULT WITH THEM, AND ON THAT
BASIS TO GIVE US CONSIDERED REPLY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT,
AS JORDAN MUST, VIEWS OF THE OTHER ARABS. HE DEEPLY

APPRECIATIVE OF PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT IN PROCESS, UNDERSTANDS OUR INTENTIONS AND STRATEGY AND WOULD NOT WANT TO PROVIDE MISLEADING OR UNREALISTIC ANSWER. KING CURRENTLY THINKING OF SEEING OTHER ARAB LEADERS HIMSELF. HE NOTED THAT THERE MUST BE TIMES WHEN PRESIDENT IS PERSUADED TO ABANDON THE PROBLEM BUT IS EXTREMELY PLEASED THAT U.S. IS KEEPING THE INITIATIVE IN ITS HANDS. END SUMMARY

1. I WAS IN TOUCH WITH KING HUSSEIN BY TELEPHONE SHORTLY AFTER RECEIVING REFTEL MORNING OCTOBER 30 AND HE RECEIVED ME AT HASHEMIYAH PALACE AN HOUR LATER. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO DELIVER AND ASKED TO SEE HIM AS SOON AS HIS SCHEDULE PERMITTED.

2. AFTER A FEW PRELIMINARY WORDS OF GREETING, I PASSED TO KING ORALLY THE INFORMATION IN PARAGRAPH 1, AND THEN GAVE HIM THE LETTER TO READ. AFTER HE READ IT, I TOLD HIM THAT I WANTED TO BE SURE HE HAD THE FULL SENSE OF OUR IDEAS AND THEREFORE READ TO HIM VERBATIM THE POINTS TO BE CONVEYED ORALLY, AND ESPECIALLY THE LAST SUBPARAGRAPH OF PARA 1. I THEN ASKED HIM FOR HIS REACTION.

3. HE SAID IMMEDIATELY THAT HE WANTED TO THANK THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS MESSAGE WHICH HE CONSIDERED VERY POSITIVE. HE HAD DELAYED WRITING IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S LAST MESSAGE BECAUSE IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS OWN POSITIVE VIEWS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 259824

HE WANTED ALSO TO CONSULT AND TRY TO CONVEY REALISTICALLY A VIEW WHICH TOOK INTO ACCOUNT WHAT THE OTHER ARABS THOUGHT SO FAR AS THIS CAN BE DONE. HE WOULD DO THE SAME NOW. THE PRESIDENT, HE SAID, WOULD NOT THANK HIM IF HE GAVE US A VIEW WHICH WAS MISLEADING OR UNRELIABLE. HE THEN APOLOGIZED FOR THE DELAY IN HIS LAST RESPONSE AND SAID HE HOPED IT WAS NOT SO GENERAL AS TO BE OF NO VALUE. I ASSURED HIM IT WAS NOT AND IN RECAPITULATING THIS PART OF OUR TALK SAID THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THAT HE THOUGHT THE REVISED APPROACH WAS A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD AND THAT AFTER CONSULTING WITH THE OTHER ARABS HE WOULD GIVE US HIS CONSIDERED VIEWS, AND HE AFFIRMED THIS SUMMARY.

4. HE THEN NOTED THAT HE SAW THREE PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS VEXING THE CHANCES FOR PEACE AND WHICH CONCERNED HIM DIRECTLY: (A) ARAB DISHARMONY OR DISUNITY; (B) UNCERTAINTY ABOUT JORDAN'S ROLE; AND (C) WHAT THE SOVIETS WERE UP TO. ON THE FIRST POINT HE SAID IN EFFECT THAT EGYPT WAS MORE WILLING TO GO TO GENEVA BUT STILL HELD ON TO SOME FIRM COMMITMENTS ABOUT THE PLO; SYRIA WAS PLAGUED BY INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROBLEMS AND LOOKED ALSO TO THE PLO AS A KIND OF COVER FOR IT; JORDAN HAD NO UNDERSTANDING WITH THE PLO; AND THE

SAUDIS SEEMED TO FAVOR ARAB UNITY BUT HAD NO IDEA ABOUT HOW TO ACHIEVE IT. (HE DID NOT SAY THAT THIS ASPECT OF THE DIFFICULTIES WOULD DIRECTLY AFFECT GETTING AGREEMENT ON THE MEMBERS OF THE PALESTINIAN DELEGATION OR THE GENERAL APPROACH THE PRESIDENT OUTLINED. HOWEVER WITHOUT HIS SAYING SO, I AM CONVINCED HE RAISED IT BECAUSE THIS PART OF THE SITUATION IS IN HIS VIEW CLEARLY GERMANE TO THE SUGGESTIONS IN THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.)

5. ON THE SECOND POINT, HE NOTED THAT JORDAN'S ROLE IS REALLY AMORPHOUS AND NOT CLEAR TO HIM. HE ALLUDED TO THE MINOR BILATERAL PROBLEMS WITH ISRAEL OVER THEIR COMMON BORDER, BUT WONDERED CLEARLY WHAT ELSE JORDAN WAS SUPPOSED TO DO? NO ONE HAD MADE THIS CLEAR AND, WITHOUT FULL BACKING FROM
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 259824

SOMEWHERE AND IN THE SENSE OF THE RABAT DECISIONS, THERE WAS LITTLE JORDAN COULD DO ALONE. WITHOUT OVER-EMPHASIZING THE POINT, I TOLD HIM WE SAW THREE ROLES FOR JORDAN TO PLAY: (A) AS A FULL MEMBER OF THE UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATION; (B) AS HE HAD NOTED IN A BILATERAL CAPACITY WITH ISRAEL; (C) AND WITH OTHERS IN THE IMPORTANT MULTILATERAL GROUPS DEALING WITH THE WEST BANK, GAZA AND THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. IN THE LATTER CASE, WE BELIEVED THAT KING'S AND JORDAN'S ROLE WAS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IF A REAL SOLUTION IS TO BE FOUND.

6. REGARDING THE SOVIETS, HE NOTED THAT HE STILL BELIEVES THE WORLD IS A BIPOLAR ENTITY, WITH THE U.S. (FREE WORLD) IN COMPETITION WITH THE SOVIETS. JORDAN IS WITH THE U.S. THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT GIVEN UP THEIR AMBITIONS AND WOULD NOW LIKE TO REDUCE THE POWER AND PRESTIGE OF THE U. S. PRESIDENCY AND PRESIDENT CARTER IN PARTICULAR. THEY CAN PLAY A WAITING GAME IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND DO WHAT IS POSSIBLE TO TRY TO ASSURE THAT THE U.S. FAILS. THEY WOULD THEN BE IN A POSITION IN BROADER TERMS TO SALVAGE FROM THE WRECKAGE A NEW AND IMPROVED POSITION IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. I TOLD HIM THAT I DID NOT HAVE ANY ILLUSIONS ABOUT SOVIET GOOD BEHAVIOR OR THAT THEY WERE MOTIVATED BY ESSENTIALLY ALTRUISTIC PURPOSES OR REASONS. NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS CLEAR THE SOVIETS AND WE BOTH WANTED TO AVOID THE CONSEQUENCES OF A CATASTROPHIC CLASH, WITH THE POSSIBLE FAILURE OF DETERRENCE. THE SOVIETS KNEW FROM OUR PAST ACTIONS THAT AN ATTEMPT BY THEM TO ACT RASHLY AND UPSET THE MIDDLE EAST COULD PROVOKE A SERIOUS REACTION FROM THE U.S. THEREFORE IT WAS MY JUDGMENT THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE A FULLY FREE HAND (AS THE KING IMPLIED) IN WHICH TO AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND CAUSE U.S. FAILURE. WE HAD TRIED HARD, WITH SOME SUCCESS, TO KEEP THEM ENGAGED IN THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM WITHOUT PUTTING THEM IN THE CENTER OF INFLUENCE AND DECISION-MAKING.
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 259824

7. AFTER EXPLORING THE ABOVE ISSUES THE KING WONDERED ALOUD WHY THE PRESIDENT DID NOT SOMEDAY JUST DROP THE PROBLEM WITH ALL THE SQUABBLING THAT WENT ON IN THE AREA AND AMONG THE PARTIES. I SAID THAT FOR A NUMBER OF VERY SIGNIFICANT REASONS, WHICH I SPELLED OUT FOR HIM (OIL PRICES AND SUPPLY, RADICALIZATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND LOSS OF MODERATE LEADERS, AND POSSIBLE LOCAL AND WORLD CONFLICT), THE PRESIDENT WAS DETERMINED TO DO ALL HE COULD TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE.

8. THE KING THEN ASKED ABOUT WHETHER SIMILAR LETTERS HAD GONE TO SADAT AND ASAD BECAUSE HE WOULD WANT TO CONSULT WITH THEM. I TOLD HIM THAT WHILE I DID NOT KNOW, I ASSUMED SUCH LETTERS HAD BEEN SENT TO THE OTHERS, AND WOULD TRY TO CONFIRM THIS POINT IMMEDIATELY. HE ALSO NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE THE EXACT FORMULATION OF OUR PROPOSAL ON CHOOSING THE PALESTINIANS AND I UNDERTOOK TO GIVE HIM THIS (BASED ON FINAL SUBPARAGRAPH OF PARA 1) IN A "NON-PAPER" FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL REFERENCE.

9. AS I LEFT HIM, AFTER DISCUSSING OTHER SUBJECTS (SEPTTEL), THE KING MUSED THAT HE MIGHT BE SENDING SHARAF AROUND THE AREA AGAIN.(SHARAF IS IN DHAHRAN, SAUDI ARABIA TODAY BRIEFING KING KHALID ON HIS (SHARAF'S) RECENT ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS IN DAMASCUS AND CAIRO.) ALTERNATIVELY, THE KING SAID HE MIGHT HIMSELF GO SEE THE OTHER LEADERS IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT CRUCIAL AND SENSITIVE PERIOD IN THIS PROCESS OF GETTING TO GENEVA.

10. COMMENT: KING'S REACTION IS PARALLEL TO THE WAY HE REACTED IN THE LAST ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS. AS HE NOTED TO ME, IF IT WERE UP TO JORDAN ALONE, HE WOULD BE AT GENEVA NOW. CLEARLY NOT ONLY DOES HE WANT TO PROTECT HIS OWN FLANK WITH THE OTHER ARABS, BUT HE IS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT DOING WHAT HE CAN BOTH TO BRING THEM ALONG (LIMITED AS HE IS IN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 259824

THIS REGARD), BUT ALSO TO TRY TO GIVE US IN THE BARGAIN A REALISTIC APPRAISAL OF THEIR REACTIONS AND THE GENERAL SITUATION. THE BASIC PROPOSALS DID NOT COME AS A SURPRISE, BUT HE DID SEEM INTRIGUED BY THE NOTION OF TRYING TO AVOID WASTING TIME OVER PROCEDURAL WRANGLES, AND TO LEAP OVER THE WORKING PAPER IN ORDER TO GET TO GENEVA. AS OPPOSED TO HIS FEELINGS IN AN EARLIER PHASE, HE NOW SEEMS SATISFIED

THAT THERE IS NOT TOO MUCH MORE WE CAN DO ON SUBSTANCE
BEFORE GOING TO GENEVA AND THAT THE RIGHT APPROACH IS TO
PUSH ON TOWARD THE CONFERENCE. END COMMENT

11. ACTION REQUESTED: CONFIRMATION THAT THE OTHER ARAB
HEADS OF STATE (SADAT AND ASAD) HAVE BEEN INFORMED SO
KING CAN TOUCH BASE WITH THEM.

12. RECOMMEND DEPT PASS CAIRO AND DAMASCUS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 30-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE259824
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: S/S:RPERITO:WES
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: N770007-0091
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From: STATE
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Line Count: 235
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 728e2b2d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 77 STATE 259811
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 884974
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER FOR KING HUSSEIN
TAGS: PGOV, PORG, JO, US, XF, (CARTER, JIMMY), (HUSSEIN)
To: WHITE HOUSE CAIRO MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/728e2b2d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009